

Christianity, Judaism and German National Socialism

Revisionism Confronts the Theology of Susannah Heschel

[Paul Grubach](#)

In the interests of fairness, Susannah Heschel was sent the following essay prior to its publication here, and asked to correct any possibly false or misleading statements. Ms. Heschel never responded.

Does Theology Matter?

Even atheists and skeptics admit that Christianity and the other equally influential religions exert a decisive impact upon world affairs. A leading historian of the ancient world, Michael Grant, in his history of the Jewish people during the Roman era, pinpointed religion's effect upon mankind with this astute observation: "For religion is an immensely significant part of secular history: whether god-given or delusive, its beliefs and cults have guided people more powerfully than any other force." [\[1\]](#) The premier skeptic, eighteenth-century Scottish philosopher David Hume, would agree. Although he contended that Christianity was "superstition," he also seriously doubted that it could ever be eliminated, as it would continue to exercise its influence far into future centuries. [\[2\]](#)

Regardless of your religious or anti-religious beliefs, one must accept that the Christian religion—along with Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and others—will continue to exert a decisive impact upon human affairs long after all of us are dead and gone. Whether you like it or not, theology really matters.

Susannah Heschel, a Jewish theologian and researcher into Christian-Jewish relations, is widely considered to be a leading authority on Christian theology in National Socialist Germany, having published a long list of studies on this topic. Her most recent book (and probably her most important), *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany*, received very favorable reviews in mainstream publications. As the present century marches on, the issues of Christianity's relationship to the Judaic religion, the Jewish people, and racial nationalism are becoming ever more important. This is one reason why Heschel's writings are of great interest, as her research addresses these topics.

The following essay is not an attempt to prove that Christianity is either true or false, or to convert anyone to any religious or anti-religious belief. Our purpose is to address (at least in part) these issues. Are there social, political or religious factors that are distorting Susannah Heschel's theological viewpoints? Does Susannah Heschel—like many other intellectuals and politicians in the West—apply a hypocritical double standard to the Jewish religion, National Socialism, Israel and the Zionist movement? Is Heschel's view of Christianity's relationship to Judaism accurate? Was there any truth to some of the religious viewpoints of Germany's National Socialist theologians? Was Jesus Christ really Jewish or was he of another ethnicity? Did the Evangelist Paul attempt to turn Christianity into a "Jewish religion?" Was at least some of what the National Socialist theologians believed consistent with a Christian message? What do Christianity and Judaism teach about ethnic nationalism? On what theological issues were the National Socialist theologians in error? Are there any similarities between Judaism and National Socialism? Are Judaism and National Socialism similar in their opposition to miscegenation? Are Jewish studies of Christianity motivated by an ulterior agenda? Are many Jews the enemy of Jesus Christ

and Christianity? Was Jesus Christ really a militant opponent of the Jewish religion as some National Socialists claimed?

These are not idle questions. Indeed, the future political and religious landscape of the world will be impacted by theological issues of this nature.

Susannah Heschel: Her Ethnic/Religious/Political Background and Ideological Biases

Susannah Heschel is the daughter of the prominent Jewish scholar and religious activist Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972), who was born in Poland, fled Europe in 1939 and subsequently became a US citizen. [3] He is generally considered to be one of the most important theologians of Judaism of his era. In the 1960s, he became an ardent supporter of the Black American movement for racial integration, as he marched with Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma, Alabama. [4] Like many other Jewish intellectuals and activists in his camp, he operated with a hypocritical double standard. Rabbi Heschel worked to create a racially integrated society in the United States. Yet, he was a zealous supporter of what Israeli scholar Uri Davis has shown to be the racially/ethnically segregated state of Israel. Indeed, the title of Davis's book says it all—*Israel: An Apartheid State*. [5]

The elder Heschel even wrote a religious tract, *Israel: An Echo of Eternity*, devoted to the racist Jewish country in the Middle East: daughter Susannah gave her endorsement to the book, as she wrote an approving Introduction in a later edition. [6] Although Ms. Heschel claims that her father spoke out against the oppression of Palestinians by Israel in the years prior to his death, he still viewed the Zionist state with mystical reverence. This statement typifies his beliefs: "For all who read the Hebrew Bible with biblical eyes the state of Israel is a solemn intimation of God's trace in history." [7] Throughout his life, Abraham Heschel attempted to articulate a religious position for left-wing Zionists and Israelis. [8]

Currently, Susannah Heschel is the Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College. She has a very strong Jewish identity, having written: "I have a passion for Jewishness, for every manifestation of it, from Workmen's Circle to Chasidic shtetls. My passion came to me as mother's milk, from wanting to emulate the Jews around me." [9] In 2005, the Jewish weekly *Forward* identified her as a candidate for the World Zionist Congress. She was then a member of The Green Zionist Alliance, which was described as advocating "an environmentalist-peace slate." [10] Her political position is similar to her father's, and can be depicted as leftist-religious-Zionist.

In her 1998 study of the nineteenth century Jewish theologian and historian Abraham Geiger, Heschel revealed the decisive influence that her religious/cultural surroundings had upon her outlook: "Above all, I have come to understand the history of Jewish-Christian relations in Germany through the German Jews I have been privileged to meet since my childhood." [11] In her most recent book, *The Aryan Jesus*, she again reveals where many of her views came from: "My childhood home was filled with German-Jewish refugee scholars who vividly illuminated for me the intellectual world that was destroyed. I want to thank my father for conveying to me a taste of the Germany he experienced in the 1920s and '30s, and for constantly reminding me, Never Despair!" [12] There is little doubt that Heschel's views have been profoundly shaped by a Judeocentric interpretation of the Jewish-German conflict of the Second World War.

In Germany during the era of the Third Reich she rightly points out that "theological scholarship was also shaped by contemporary politics." [13] As we shall soon see, "contemporary politics" also impacts her

theological scholarship. Although Heschel's books and essays are well written, interesting and intellectually stimulating, she lets her Jewish identity and Zionist politics act as distorting influences upon her work.

Professor Heschel emphasizes how the Holocaust ideology traumatized her. She says that family members were murdered by the Germans: "Within my family certain horrors stood out. The murder of family members was so terrible that it was discussed only rarely, perhaps once in five years, and then only in whispers. Mentioning even briefly what had happened to my grandmother, for example, caused a depression that hung over our household for days."[\[14\]](#)

She experienced a sense of horror while examining documents in the Central Archives of the Protestant Church, located in the former West Berlin, which dealt with the activities and beliefs of bishops, pastors, and professors who were passionately opposed to the Jewish people during the Third Reich. After hearing the archivist defend the activities and claims of these pro-National Socialist Germans and the German cause, she "trembled uncontrollably," and the next morning "woke up covered with hives."[\[15\]](#)

Heschel's theological viewpoints are profoundly shaped by the assumption that the traditional Holocaust story is an unquestionable fact. She emphasizes that "the Nazi regime carried out its genocide of the Jews" during "the six years of its existence," and was "deeply moved" by her German friends' "understanding of the enormity of German crimes."[\[16\]](#) And of course, she firmly believes the Germans murdered Jews in "gas chambers" with Zyklon B gas.[\[17\]](#) Taking a quote from her father, Heschel writes that "Auschwitz is in our [the Jewish people's] veins."[\[18\]](#)

Heschel ignores the fact that her traditional Holocaust story is not only a feeble ideology that cannot be substantiated with physical/forensic evidence, but also, much of it can be shown to be false. Consider this. In December 2009, one of the widely recognized authorities on the Auschwitz concentration camp, Robert Jan van Pelt, admitted that: "Ninety-nine per cent of what we know [about the Auschwitz extermination story] we do not actually have the physical evidence to prove..." Professor van Pelt added this most telling statement: "We in the future—remembering the Holocaust—will operate in the same way that we remember most things from the past. We will know about it from literature and eyewitness testimony..."[\[19\]](#)

Here we have a Dutch-Jewish academic who was recognized by the British legal system as an expert on the alleged Auschwitz "gas chamber" technology, admitting that there really is no physical/scientific evidence to prove that those "homicidal gas chambers" ever existed! The "truth" of the orthodox Auschwitz extermination story is ultimately based upon eyewitness testimony—really no different from a religious dogma that has only eyewitness testimony to substantiate it. Other genocidal mass killings of the past, such as the Katyn Forest massacre committed by the Soviet Secret Police in the 1940s, have abundant, undeniable physical/forensic evidence to prove that they actually occurred.[\[20\]](#)

Furthermore, just like other influential intellectuals in her camp, Heschel overlooks all the scientific evidence that discredits the traditional Holocaust story. As an example, consider the revisionist studies of the alleged Auschwitz "gas chambers." Fred Leuchter was at one time the main authority on gas-chamber technology in the United States. Though flawed, his forensic study of the "Auschwitz extermination technology" dealt a damaging blow to this legend.[\[21\]](#) A more thorough and scientifically accurate study of the Auschwitz "gas chambers" was carried out by the German scientist Germar Rudolf. Rudolf's meticulous inquiry showed beyond a reasonable doubt that the traditional Auschwitz

extermination story is false. [22] The present German government was unable to refute Rudolf's expert report and his other Revisionist studies of the "Holocaust" with reason and evidence. The only thing they could do is imprison him for telling the truth.

In a series of well documented and skillfully argued studies, Revisionist historians Carlo Mattogno and Jürgen Graf discredited the claim that "homicidal mass gassings" of Jews took place at the Treblinka, Majdanek and Belzec concentration camps. [23] Heschel and her group of pro-Zionist intellectuals have conveniently ignored all of the foregoing Revisionist evidence.

Heschel criticized the Christian Church's past ideological dominance, as she referred to "the institutional power of the [Christian] church that transformed falsehoods into accepted truth, a system of power that more recent theorists have termed an 'ideological regime.'" [24] In the Western world of the past, Heschel continues, "the dominant ideology was a Christian one, attempting to present itself as secular moral and cultural values and equating Christianity with the highest expression of religion, rather than as one particular religion whose claims required justification before the bar of reason and historical investigation." [25]

Likewise, a very similar statement could be used to describe Heschel's traditional view of the Holocaust. The institutional power of the Jewish-Zionist power elite has transformed "Holocaust" falsehoods into accepted truth, a system of power that could be rightly termed an "ideological regime of the Holocaust." The only unquestionable ideology in the Western World today is that of the "Holocaust," as it has been elevated to the status of a secular religion. In the Western world, the Holocaust religion does not require justification before the bar of reason and historical investigation. Quite the contrary! It cannot even be disputed in "respectable" forums. Belief in it is strictly enforced with taboos, underhanded tactics and prison sentences in many European nations for people who dispute it. Indeed, in America and Europe the Holocaust is to be slavishly accepted as "historical fact," and any "Holocaust deniers" are to be persecuted and/or denied a public forum in mainstream discourse. The intolerant Holocaust religion is the ideological backdrop of Heschel's theological and historical views.

Rarely does Heschel point out where the National Socialist intellectuals put forth an accurate viewpoint. Much of the time she simply condemns and demonizes them, implicitly or explicitly. Yet, whether she is aware of it or not, some of her declarations actually support National Socialist viewpoints. Consider this example. Heschel admits that the Jewish community is an alien element among Christian European societies, for she wrote: "Although the Jews did not constitute a territorial colony of Europe, they formed an internal colony in Europe, under the domination of Christian powers." [26] Later on in the same essay she adds: "As much as Jews are inside the Christian world, they are also outsiders; they occupy a position of ambivalence and ambiguity that functions as a kind of counter-history to the multicultural account of the West: not all White Europeans are Christians." [27] Interestingly enough, this is similar to the belief of an intellectual forefather of National Socialist ideology, Paul de Lagarde (whom Heschel refers to twice in *The Aryan Jesus*). In the words of George L. Mosse, a Jewish historian whose research Heschel relies upon: "Lagarde felt that their religion kept Jews separate, and that they were in fact a coherent and dangerous minority within the Christian state." [28]

Finally, as we shall see in the following sections, Heschel's writings are plagued with a hypocritical double standard. She condemns (implicitly or explicitly) aspects of German National Socialism that are also characteristic of her own beliefs and the sources of her identity—Jewish culture and Israel.

Zionism and National Socialism: Heschel's Hypocritical Double Standard on the Race Issue

In her books and essays Heschel sends the message that ethnic/racial nationalism is evil and bad for non-Jews, while at the same time she supports ethnic nationalism—that is, Zionism—for Jews. Heschel is also a critic of White Christian civilization, for she has written: "When the story of male, white, Christian Western civilization is related, should not its cultural glories be tempered with the evidence of its racism and misogyny?"^[29] Likewise with Heschel's Judaism: when the story of Jewish history is related, should not its cultural glories be tempered with the evidence of its racism and misogyny?

In her magnum opus, *The Aryan Jesus*, she consistently condemns as "racist" non-Jewish movements of racial nationalism, like German National Socialism and the former South African Apartheid society.^[30] Yet, I cannot find anywhere where she specifically condemns Jewish-Zionist ethnic nationalism and ethnic/racial segregation in Israel. Quite the contrary! She ardently supports the apartheid Zionist state.

To be fair, Heschel has criticized certain actions of the Zionist movement and Israeli government, but makes it clear that she is a "strong Zionist." We give you Susannah Heschel in her own words from a October 2002 essay: "Many of us on campus are deeply critical of what we consider to be gross violations of human rights committed by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, and yet we are strong Zionists. Unlike the Likud Party, we believe two states need to be established, Israel and Palestine, for reasons of politics, security and morality."^[31]

Heschel piously insists she wants to follow in her father's footsteps, as she chooses to raise her daughters with "the spirit of Selma [Alabama]."^[32] (This is the Southern city in the United States where Martin Luther King Jr. marched to achieve racial integration.) That is, she wants to instill in her descendants a desire to build egalitarian and racially integrated societies—everywhere outside of her beloved Israel. In regard to the Jewish state in the Middle East her "morality" demands that she supports segregation, where Jews and Palestinian Arabs would live in separate states.

A recent US State Department report shows that the object of Heschel's ethnic/religious identity, Israel, is an intolerant society that discriminates against non-Jews and where Jewish supremacy is the order of the day—a fact that is in total conflict with her left-wing politics. The Zionist state falls short in tolerance toward minorities, equal treatment of ethnic groups, openness toward various streams within society, and respect for holy and other sites. The US State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor documented how Israel discriminates against Muslims, Jehovah's Witnesses, Reform Jews, Christians, women and Bedouin people. According to this comprehensive report, "the government implements regulations only for Jewish sites. Non-Jewish holy sites do not enjoy legal protection under it because the government does not recognize them as official holy sites." Among other examples, the report notes that more than 300,000 immigrants who are not considered Jewish under rabbinical law are not allowed to marry and divorce or be buried in Jewish cemeteries.^[33]

Furthermore, Israeli law distinguishes between "citizenship" and "nationality." This legal artifice gives Jews special privileges that non-Jews are deprived of. The special status of "Jewish nationality" has been a way to undermine the citizenship rights of non-Jews, especially the fifth of the population who are Arab. Some thirty laws specifically favor Jews to the detriment of others, including in the areas of immigration rights, naturalization, access to land and employment.^[34] Despite the fact that the racial-

integrationist "spirit of Selma, Alabama" is totally absent in Israel, the Jewish state still captivates Heschel's allegiance.

The "anti-racist" Heschel supports her father's condemnation of "racism." She emphatically repeats what the elder Heschel preached : "Racism is Satanism, unmitigated evil..."^[35] If this is so, then daughter Heschel should abandon her Zionism, as it is a philosophy and violent movement that is firmly grounded in the anti-integrationist racial thought of the past and present.^[36] Echoing the feelings of a large number of Jews, the prominent Zionist leader Stephen S. Wise, a former president of the American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress, told a New York rally in June 1938: "I am not an American citizen of the Jewish faith, I am a Jew...Hitler was right in one thing. He calls the Jewish people a race and we are a race."^[37]

Heschel refers to "Germany's military and racial goals of domination over Europe."^[38] Likewise with her Zionist movement—their racial goal was the domination of land occupied by Palestinian Arabs. With the use of archival evidence, Israeli historians Simha Flapan and Ilan Pappé have demonstrated that from its very inception a central plank of Israel's founding ideology was the forcible removal of Palestinian Arabs and the creation of an ethnically homogenous, Jewish supremacist state.^[39]

In the words of a prophet of Zionism, Moses Hess, "Jews are not a religious group, but a separate nation, a special race, and the modern Jew who denies this is not only an apostate, a religious renegade, but a traitor to his people, his tribe, his race."^[40] In a similar vein, the founder of modern Zionism, Theodore Herzl, wrote: "I referred previously to our [Jewish] assimilation [with gentiles]. I do not for a moment wish to imply that I desire such an end. Our national character is too glorious in history and, in spite of every degradation, too noble to make its annihilation desirable."^[41] This is very significant. Both Heschels, the father and daughter, worked to promote racial integration and assimilation between whites and non-whites in the United States. Yet, both are on record as propounding an ideology that opposes integration and assimilation between Jews and non-Jews. Indeed, as the Jewish weekly Forward recently pointed out, separation between Jews and Palestinians is an integral platform of left-wing Zionism—the political movement that Susannah Heschel is a part of.^[42]

Heschel is fond of pointing out how National Socialism discriminated against Jews, but she fails to note that very similar discriminatory practices against non-Jews are in place in the Israeli state that has captivated her devotion. She says that Christian churches failed to condemn the Nazi laws that put Jews into a separate racial category and also banned non-Aryans from the German civil service.^[43] Yet, almost-identical laws are in place in her beloved Israel. In the Zionist state, racial categorization begins at birth. As the Israeli scholar Uri Davis has pointed out, the law is set up in such a manner that a Jewish infant is registered as having Israeli citizenship at birth, whereas an Arab newborn is stateless at birth, his citizenship status being indefinite.^[44]

American-Jewish scholar Ian Lustick pointed out that the Israeli military is, by and large, a segregated institution. Most Muslim Arabs, who constitute the overwhelming majority of Israeli Arab citizens, do not serve in the armed forces—they are not conscripted, nor are they permitted to volunteer for service. This has important social consequences. In Israel, participation in the armed services is a prerequisite to social advancement and mobility. Cut off from the military, they are cut off from access to one of the main avenues of social advancement.^[45] Just as National Socialist laws banned Jews from the German civil service, so too do Israeli practices and laws ban Arabs from social advancement and upward mobility.

As the evolutionary psychologist Kevin MacDonald has cogently argued, German National Socialism and Jewish Zionism are mirror images of each other—something that the Abraham and Susannah Heschels of the world do not admit.^[46] It is clearly hypocritical for Heschel to act as a critic of National Socialist ethnic nationalism and discriminatory practices against Jews while she herself passionately identifies with a state and ideology that espouses a similar ethnic nationalism for Jews and practices a similar discrimination against non-Jews. In all of her work, Heschel never explains why (in her view) it was "morally wrong" for Germans to have been racial nationalists (i.e., National Socialists), yet, it was and is "morally correct" for Jews to be racial nationalists (i.e., Zionists). Professor Heschel, a theologian well immersed in religious ethics, never explains the moral dichotomy she has brought to light. Why it was "morally wrong" for Germans to have supported a National Socialist state that discriminated against Jews: yet, it is "morally correct" for Jews to ardently support a Zionist state that discriminates against non-Jews. This hypocritical racial double standard plagues all of her work.

Heschel's Depiction of Christianity in National-Socialist Germany

During the era of the Third Reich, there were two major competing factions within German Protestantism. The Confessing Church held that the Old Testament, with its Jewish origins, formed a permanent part of the Christian religion. Although they were critical of Jewish influence, Confessing Church clerics accepted Jews who had undergone the rite of baptism into the Christian religion.^[47] Nonetheless, most members of this faction maintained support for the National Socialist government and they believed that Jews and Judaism were a degenerate moral and spiritual influence upon Christians.^[48]

The German Christians promoted a more radical, racial-ethnic oriented Christianity. They linked religion with ethnicity, which Heschel admits is also characteristic of Judaism.^[49] They were adamantly opposed to the Jews, and many of them contended that Jesus was not Jewish, and the Old Testament should be expunged from the Christian canon of sacred literature.^[50] Even so, at least some of them believed that there was religious value to the Old Testament, but its "Jewish spirit" needed to be eliminated. In a 1940 German Christian catechism it was stated: "What do we think of the Old Testament? Just as in a field grain and weeds grow together, so the Old Testament contains good and evil. We have reverence for its eternal truths about God, but we exterminate its Jewish spirit root and branch."^[51]

The German Christians also insisted that large portions of the New Testament needed to be revised in order to reconcile it with their racist National Socialism.^[52] The German Christian movement rejected the idea of the Confessing Church that once a Jew had undergone the rite of Baptism he became a Christian.^[53] The movement's leaders believed that Baptism could not wipe away the imprint of race or ethnicity. On key issues the German Christians stood in opposition to the Confessing Church, and there was tension between the two factions throughout the Third Reich.^[54]

Heschel maintains that German Catholicism was in a position similar to that of the Confessing Church. Being theologically conservative, they refused to alter basic Christian doctrines, but nevertheless, they still maintained that Jews were a negative influence upon Christians.^[55]

In May 1939, a group of German Christian clerics, churchgoers and theologians founded the Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish Influence on German Church Life (hereafter referred to as "the Institute"). The Institute's goal's were to rid Christianity of Jewish influence, and to redefine Christianity as a Germanic religion whose founder, Jesus, was no Jew, but an enemy of the Jews, who had fought to

destroy Judaism, but in the end fell as a victim in that struggle.^[56] Some members of this National Socialist think tank went so far as to claim that Jesus Christ was an Aryan, and Paul, as a Jew, had falsified Jesus's message.^[57]

The Institute's academic director, Walter Grundmann, was a prolific scholar and professor of New Testament and Völkish Theology at the University of Jena.^[58] He declared that just as Luther had overcome Catholicism during the Reformation, so too did Protestants have to overcome Judaism. This meant that the Bible would have to be purged of the Old Testament—a platform that Confessing Church theologians rejected.^[59] In the post World War II era, Grundmann was an informant for the communist secret police in East Germany.^[60] To Susannah Heschel, Grundmann is a Satanic figure who is guilty of spreading propaganda lies. We shall see if this is so later on in this essay.

The preceding depiction of Christianity during the Third Reich is based solely upon Professor's Heschel's writings. It is assumed to be reasonably accurate.

Christianity's Relationship to Judaism: Is Heschel's View Correct?

In response to the Institute's attempt to wipe out Jewish influence upon Christianity—that is, to "de Judaize" it—Heschel proposed an opposing view on the association between the two religions. In her theological outlook, Christianity is inextricably bound to Judaism, for she stated: "Christianity depends on Judaism for its central theological concepts."^[61] She developed this theme more completely in *The Aryan Jesus*: "The question of the de Judaization effort of the Institute has to be examined not only in terms of Third Reich politics, but as a Christian theological phenomenon that engaged a vast number of pastors, bishops, and academic theologians. Christianity came into being by resting on the theological foundations of Judaism; it is often said that Judaism and Christianity stand in mother-daughter relationship. Nearly every central theological concept of Christianity rests on a Jewish foundation, from messiah to divine election. Affirming what is central to Christian teaching usually entails an affirmation of a Jewish idea or a text from the Old Testament, so that attempting to eradicate the Jewish was a kind of 'theological bulimia.'"^[62]

Heschel's view is contradicted by that of one of her mentors, Abraham Geiger. In a discussion of the work and arguments of this nineteenth-century Jewish historian who wrote extensively on the historical background of Jesus and early Judaism, she stated: "The later dogma of Christian theology concerning Jesus—the virgin birth, the Incarnation, the Resurrection—were later theological inventions that resulted from pagan philosophical influences."^[63] So, in *The Aryan Jesus* she says that "nearly every central theological concept of Christianity rests on Jewish foundation, from messiah to divine election." Yet, in another book, she repeats the claim of a researcher who said that the most important dogmas of Christian theology—the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation, and the Resurrection—did not rest on a Jewish foundation, but were acquired from non-Jewish sources: Heschel never said that this was false.

Directly refuting Heschel, some of the most important concepts of Christianity are totally foreign to Judaism. The central doctrine of the Trinity—three persons in one God (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit)—does not rest on a Jewish foundation. Heschel noted that before the fourteenth century, Judaism legally classified Christianity as "idolatry" for its trinitarianism.^[64] The Incarnation is another prime example—God became a human being in the person of Jesus Christ. Skeptics of the past, such as Voltaire, have pointed out that the Jewish religion regarded the idea of a God-man as "monstrous."

These non-Christians contend that this Christian concept was borrowed from pagan sources such as the Romans, who deified mortals. [\[65\]](#)

The late Holocaust historian Raul Hilberg also noted that the idea of a God-man is anathema to Judaism. This Jewish intellectual's view of Christian origins is much more accurate than Heschel's: "In the very early stages of the Christian faith, many Jews regarded Christians as members of a Jewish sect. The first Christians, after all, still observed the Jewish law. They had merely added a few nonessential practices, such as baptism, to their religious faith. But their view was changed abruptly when Christ was elevated to Godhood. The Jews have only one God. This God is indivisible. He is a jealous God and admits of no other gods. He is not Christ, and Christ is not He. Christianity and Judaism have since been irreconcilable. An acceptance of Christianity has since signified an abandonment of Judaism." [\[66\]](#)

Hilberg's view is supported by the statement in John 5: 18. It is said that the Jews wanted to kill Jesus Christ because he put himself on the level of God: "This was why the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath, but also called God his Father, making himself equal with God." Even if, as some skeptics say, this passage is not historically accurate because the event depicted never happened, it still accurately expresses one reason why religious Jews have rejected the Christian religion throughout the ages: the thought of a God-man is abhorrent to them. The Incarnation, arguably the most important concept in all of Christianity, does not rest on a Jewish foundation. Directly contradicting Heschel, Christianity does not depend upon Judaism for this central theological concept.

The central Christian doctrine of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Mark 13: 1-37) does not rest on a Jewish foundation. Judaism contends that he was a mere mortal who will never return to earth. Contrary to what Heschel claims, affirming this doctrine does not also entail affirming a Jewish idea.

We have identified three central Christian concepts—the Trinity, Incarnation and Second Coming—that do not rest on a Jewish foundation, which discredits Heschel's claim that "nearly every central theological concept of Christianity rests on a Jewish foundation, from messiah to divine election." To be fair, it could be said that the doctrine of the Resurrection rests on a Jewish foundation. Catholic scholars point out that it was expressed in Daniel 12: 1-3 and other passages in the Old Testament.

It is important to point out that even where a Christian teaching entails affirming or quoting a text from the Old Testament, the Christian teaching many times contradicts Jewish teachings. Let me give three examples.

Although the Virgin Birth from Matthew 1: 22-23 is based upon a passage from the Old Testament, it is a uniquely Christian interpretation of a passage from Isaiah 7: 14. Jews throughout the ages have rejected this interpretation. The central Christian theological concept of Christ being the prophesied messiah of the Old Testament has been adamantly rejected by Jews down through the ages. Jews say that Christians misinterpreted the meaning of the messiah foretold by the Prophets. Christians say otherwise, as it is the Jews who fail to accept that Jesus is the Divine Savior foretold by the Hebrew Scriptures. Even here, as one of Heschel's mentors, the Jewish historian Abraham Geiger, pointed out, Christians and Jews give the messiah doctrine two different and irreconcilable interpretations. [\[67\]](#)

A scholar of ancient history, Michael Grant, provided another example. He notes that the Evangelist Paul, by appealing to various Old Testament texts, believed that the crucifixion of Jesus made possible the forgiveness of men's sins. Yet even though Paul used beliefs from Jewish Scriptures to bolster his

argument, the end result was still incompatible with Jewish thinking. We let Professor Grant complete the story: "For all Paul's Pharisaic background, it was an argument singularly unacceptable to the Jews, because belief in the expiatory death of Jesus clashed with the great prophetic doctrine according to which God vouchsafed the penitent sinner his free forgiveness—a doctrine which, according to Jewish thought, was the only real remedy for sin."[\[68\]](#)

Christianity did indeed come from Judaism, as it was founded within a Jewish milieu. Paul made this perfectly clear in his Letter to the Romans 3:2: "To begin with, the Jews are entrusted with the oracles of God." Even the Gospel of John (4:22), which is very critical of the Jews, says that "salvation comes from the Jews." The list of Old Testament ideas and allusions in the New Testament are numerous. But this does not mean that Christianity is therefore forever bound to and fully compatible with Judaism. Lutheranism and Catholicism came from the same source, but centuries ago there was a split because of the irreconcilable differences between them: so too is the split between Judaism and Christianity even more pronounced because of the even greater irreconcilable differences. The Jewish Talmud provides us with even more good reasons why we should reject Heschel's claim that Judaism and Christianity stand in a "mother-daughter relationship."

The reader must understand how important the Talmud is to Judaism and the Jewish people. Adin Steinsaltz, Talmudic authority and former Head of the Israel Institute for Talmudic Publications, explained: "If the Bible is the cornerstone of Judaism, then the Talmud is the central pillar, soaring up from the foundations and supporting the entire spiritual and intellectual edifice. In many ways the Talmud is the most important book in Jewish culture, the backbone of creativity and national life. No other work has had a comparable influence on the theory and practice of Jewish life, shaping spiritual content and serving as a guide to conduct. The Jewish people have always been keenly aware that their continued survival and development depend on the study of the Talmud, and those hostile to Judaism have also been cognizant of this fact."[\[69\]](#)

As far back as 1892, the Russian Roman Catholic Priest I. B. Pranaitis uncovered the hate for Jesus Christ and the anti-Christian beliefs that characterize the Talmud.[\[70\]](#) Pranaitis's research has been subsequently confirmed by more recent scholarship. Professor Peter Schäfer, who is the head of Princeton University's Judaic Studies Program, devoted an entire book to this issue.

The Talmud says that Jesus is punished in Hell for eternity by being made to sit in a cauldron of boiling excrement. That image appears in early manuscripts of the Babylonian Talmud, as does a brief account of Jesus's trial and execution—not by the Romans but by the Jewish high court, the Sanhedrin. The Jewish community, to the extent Jews were even aware of these excised texts, has been content to let them remain obscure and unknown. The Talmud's scattered portrait of Jesus unapologetically mocks Christian doctrines including the virgin birth and the resurrection. The rabbinic invective is meant to insult Christianity. In his book, Schäfer calls the Talmud's assault on Christian claims "devastating."[\[71\]](#) In her declaration on the relation of Christianity to Judaism, Heschel omits consideration that the Talmud contains some of the most degrading statements on Jesus Christ and Christian religion that one will ever read.

Schäfer's study makes it clear that the Talmud is every bit as offensive to Christians as the Gospels are to Jews. Indeed, the historian of ancient Judaism and Christianity, Michael Grant, contends that "despite [the Christian Gospels'] insistence on the Judaism of Jesus, all four Gospels are at the same time markedly, indeed violently, anti-Jewish."[\[72\]](#) Jews throughout the ages maintained that the Christian

Scriptures are very offensive. Likewise with Christians: they find the Jewish Scriptures to be very offensive. This fact alone undermines Heschel's belief that Christianity is inextricably bound to Judaism.

The German Christian View of the Relation between Judaism and Christianity

In April 1939, the German Christians published the Godesburg Declaration. In it we find this key passage: "What is the relation between Judaism and Christianity? Is Christianity derived from Judaism and its continuation and completion, or does Christianity stand in opposition to Judaism? We answer this question: Christianity is the unbridgeable religious opposition to Judaism." [73]

The German Christians were somewhat mistaken on this issue. Christianity was derived from Judaism—this is bridge between the two. Yet, Christianity evolved into a religion that is, in many ways, irreconcilable with Judaism. On the other hand, Heschel is also wrongheaded. If Heschel wants to claim that Christianity and Judaism "stand in a mother-daughter relationship," then it is a case in which the "mother" (Judaism) came to hate and despise her own "daughter" (Christianity), and vice versa: the antagonistic "daughter" ultimately cut herself off from her hostile "mother."

We have already noted that in her attempt to rebut the German Christians, Heschel wrote: "Christianity came into being by resting on the theological foundations of Judaism." This is only partly correct. As the German Protestant theologian Rudolph Bultmann (who opposed Hitler's National Socialist regime), and historian of Christianity Robert M. Grant have so convincingly shown, Christianity had its roots in the Old Testament and the Jewish tradition. However, contact with other religions and philosophies—Hellenistic paganism, Near Eastern religions, Stoicism, and Gnosticism—added much to the foundation of the early Christian movement. [74] Christianity came into being by resting on some of the theological foundations of Judaism, and also upon theological sources that were separate from the traditional Jewish religion. Believing Christians say that that the latter sources are also of supernatural origin, but the Jews have rejected them.

It is interesting to note that both Heschel and her opponent, the anti-Christian National Socialist ideologist Alfred Rosenberg, made almost identical claims. Rosenberg preached that Christianity's central teachings were Jewish. [75] Heschel advocates a similar creed. [76] As the preceding discussion shows, both are mistaken.

"[B]y rejecting selected doctrines about Jesus, theologians easily could manipulate the gospel texts and revise them to construct a Jesus in their own image." [77] Interestingly enough, a similar charge may be reflected right back at Heschel: by rejecting selected Christian doctrines, she could easily manipulate Christian history and theology and revise them to construct a Christian religion into an image that serves her own agenda. A major intent of Heschel's research is to find out "how German Protestantism benefited from Nazi racism." [78] A quite similar question is raised by this study: how does Heschel's racist Jewish-Zionism benefit from her distorted theological beliefs? To this issue we must now turn our attention.

What is the Goal of Jewish Studies of Christianity?

German Christians associated with the Institute alleged that Jews throughout the centuries distorted and falsified the Christian religion. Expounding upon this theme, Heschel writes: "Paranoia about Jewish power over Christianity was regnant in their [the Institute's] theology; the Jews had falsified the message of Jesus, judaizing the gospels with their interpolations of Jewish teachings that went contrary

to the anti-Jewish campaign launched by Jesus. Christianity required purification from Jewish influences in order to recover the original, true meaning..."[79]

To be sure, the Institute did, at times, engage in exaggeration and distortion. Nonetheless, their concerns about Jewish attempts to twist the meaning of the Gospels were not unfounded. Heschel herself has indirectly confirmed this. Let us quote exactly what Heschel has claimed was an original intent of Jewish religious studies: "[T]he first practitioners of Jewish studies saw the study of Judaism as not simply an addition to the general curriculum but as a revision of that curriculum, an effort to resist and even overthrow the standard portrayal of Western history. In this version, at the heart of the West would stand the Hebrew Bible and rabbinic literature, not the classical Greek civilization of the New Testament, and the history of Christian thought would be presented as a derivatory offshoot of Jewish ideas." [80] In other words, the aim of Jewish studies was to make Judaism and rabbinic ideas dominant in Christian theology and history—a claim consistent with belief of the Institute that certain Jews were trying to "judaize the gospels."

Heschel continues on the agenda of Jewish studies: "Thus, Jewish studies emerged not as a politically neutral field concerned with describing the history of the Jews but as a politically charged effort to reconceive Christian history as well." [81] Heschel makes more statements that may shed even more light upon her ulterior agenda and that of her Jewish studies colleagues: "Telling the story of Christian origins from a Jewish perspective was an act of Jewish empowerment." [82] Once again, here we have another Heschel admission that certain Jews were driven by an ulterior political agenda: they wanted to gain power over Christianity and thereby fashion Christian history to make it more subservient to a Jewish agenda.

Finally, Heschel may have revealed her ulterior motives when she wrote: "Seen in this light, the modern Jewish retelling of Christian origins is not really a matter of Jews attempting to 'set the record straight.' Rather, it demonstrates a Jewish desire to enter the Christian myth, become its hero, and claim the power inherent to it." [83] Continuing in this vein, consider what she has written about the motives and agenda of the Jewish theological historian Abraham Geiger: "Telling the story of the life of Jesus became Geiger's appropriation of the Jesus myth. Through his retelling, Geiger the Jew became the hero, claiming the power that inheres in the story for himself and his community." [84]

So there you have it. By telling the story of Jesus and Christian origins from a Jewish perspective, Jews gain power over Christianity by "judaizing the gospels," and this in turn, serves to empower the Jewish community. Now perhaps we can better understand any underlying motives Heschel may have. A distorted and inaccurate view of Christian origins like the one Dr. Heschel promotes enables her to enter into the Christian story, and harness the power of the story for the best interests of her Jewish community and the Zionist movement. Her skewed views would suggest to Christians that they are bound to and forever beholden to the Judaic religion and Jewish interests.

The "Aryan Jesus"

As Heschel points out, the theory that Jesus Christ was not Jewish, but rather an Aryan, had its beginnings in nineteenth-century historical, theological and racist writings. [85] Here is the "Aryan Jesus" argument in brief. The New Testament region of Galilee remained outside the Jewish sphere until Aristobulus I, a Jewish king, conquered it c. 103 BCE, forcibly converting its inhabitants to the Judaism. Before the birth of Jesus then, the Galilee was populated by Gentiles. Those inhabitants who were

forcibly converted to Judaism were Jewish by religion only, not by ethnicity. The end result was a Galilee of mixed ethnicity. Some then speculated that because Jesus was a Galilean, he was not truly of Jewish ethnicity. One of the central arguments of the Institute was that Jesus was a descendent of the purportedly Aryan population of Galilee.[\[86\]](#)

In a well documented and skillfully argued study of ancient Galilee, New Testament scholar Mark A. Chancey concluded that it is a myth that Galilee in the time of Jesus Christ was populated by mostly Gentiles. There may have been a small minority of Gentiles, but the vast majority of its inhabitants were of Jewish descent.[\[87\]](#) Thus, even if Jesus was born and raised in Galilee, it is unlikely that he was an Aryan as the members of the Institute claimed. (A thorough, critical evaluation of this viewpoint is beyond the scope of this essay.)

Heschel insists that the German Christians who promoted the Aryan Jesus concept were fashioning a view of Jesus Christ that served their agenda: they wanted a God who had their own ethnic identity and "fit in" with their racialist ideology.[\[88\]](#) Yet, this twisting and fashioning of the historical evidence in order to make it conform to a National Socialist agenda is really a mirror image of Heschel's twisting and fashioning the evidence to make the Christian religion conform to her own Zionist agenda. She admits that Jews of centuries past "constructed" Jesus Christ in "their own image."[\[89\]](#) Heschel is heir to this tradition.

Nevertheless, as Biblical scholar Chancey points out, the Gospel writer of Matthew (1: 3-16) lists Gentile women in Jesus's genealogy, and suggests that this may have been mentioned to show that Gentiles will eventually be included in God's salvation plan.[\[90\]](#) In fact, one Catholic Biblical authority identifies four of the women in the genealogy as Gentiles: including women in a genealogy was contrary to Semitic custom.[\[91\]](#) Although there is a huge controversy that surrounds all aspects of the New Testament's genealogies of Jesus, with some claiming they are fabrications, there are other Biblical scholars who believe that Matthew's genealogy is of Christ's mother, Mary.[\[92\]](#) If Jesus really did have Gentile women in his ancestry, then Heschel's view is weakened: Jesus was not "totally Jewish." Either Professor Heschel is unaware of this fact or she is aware of it and chose not to mention it. I now ask her this question: If Jesus Christ was not "purely Jewish," but of mixed Jewish-Gentile ancestry, what are the theological implications?

The Issue of Paul's Jewish Ethnicity and National Socialism

Some German nationalists and National Socialists charged that Paul, a former Pharisee of Jewish descent and the second most important figure in Christianity, falsified the Christian message with Jewish beliefs. The 19th century philologist Paul de Lagarde alleged that while Jesus was not Jewish, Paul had falsified the Christian message by "judaizing it."[\[93\]](#) The members of the Institute held similar beliefs: Paul, as a Jew, had falsified Jesus's message.[\[94\]](#) Supposedly, Hitler himself believed that Jesus's message was falsified and exploited by Paul.[\[95\]](#) When in November 1933, a German Christian leader denounced Paul as a "Jewish theologian" in a speech in which he preached other anti-Jewish claims, he received a thunderous applause from 20,000 attendees at a Berlin rally.[\[96\]](#) In 1936, a National Socialist pastor charged that Paul transformed Christianity into a Jewish religion.[\[97\]](#) Nevertheless, Heschel notes that Institute director Walter Grundmann at one point in his career put forth the directly opposite view of Paul: he was "the sharpest fighter against judaizing tendencies within Christianity."[\[98\]](#) Wherein lays the truth?

In the Christian view, Paul was simply a messenger from God, and the only thing that really counts in the end is the message that Paul sent his listeners. What should be pointed out to both Heschel and the anti-Pauline critics is that Paul put forth an ambivalent and paradoxical view of the Jewish people. His stance can be summed up by his statement in Romans 11: 28: "In respect to the Gospel, the Jews are enemies of God for your sake; in respect to the election, they are beloved by him because of the patriarchs."

For those National Socialists who charged that Paul was a "judaizer of Christianity," I would quote this passage from 1Thessalonians 2: 14-16: "Brothers, you have been made like the churches of God in Judea which are in Christ Jesus. You suffered the same fate from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and persecuted us. Displeasing to God and hostile to mankind, they try to keep us from preaching salvation to the Gentiles. All this time they have been 'filling up their quota of sins,' but the wrath has descended upon them at last." Only by a twisted and contorted interpretation could one conclude that this is the declaration of a "judaizer" of the Gospels. The Catholic editors of *The New American Bible* point out that here Paul is condemning "the active Jewish opposition to the Gospel, branding it as sin and worthy of divine punishment."

Paul wrote in Titus 1: 13-14: "Admonish them sharply, in an attempt to keep them closely to sound faith, and unaffected by Jewish myths or rules invented by men who have swerved from the truth." According to the Catholic editors of the *New American Bible*, in this passage Paul was expressing opposition to the forcing of Mosaic Law upon Gentile converts to Christianity. This is consistent with the view that Paul was an opponent of attempts to enforce Jewish customs upon the growing Christian movement.

Finally, historian of the ancient world Michael Grant put forth other reasons why Paul's doctrines conflicted with the traditional Jewish religion. The proper basis for membership in "Israel," Paul insisted, had never been observance of Jewish Law or descent from the Jewish patriarchs, but faith. Another source of friction was Paul's deliberate campaign of Gentile conversion, which seemed to violate the doctrine of the Chosen People, the Jewish elect.^[99] Clearly, many in the German Christian movement were mistaken on the issue of Paul and his alleged attempt to "judaize" the Christian religion. In this writer's opinion, Heschel never adequately noted this.

The Fear of Miscegenation in Judaism, Zionism and National Socialism

The German Christian movement held that miscegenation is a sin against God's will.^[100] Heschel condemned German Nationalists as "racists" and "anti-Semites" because of their "fear of miscegenation," for she wrote: "Legal cases in German courts, brought in the wake of the Nuremberg Laws' criminalization of sexual relations and marriage between Jews and Aryans, and widely reported in the German press, implicated Jews as sexual predators of Aryans, further encouraging Christian theologians to insist on protecting Christian purity by eradicating Jewishness with even more measures. The penetration of Christian bodies by Jewish sex reiterated a typical motif of racist rhetoric, the dangers of miscegenation, and reinforced fears that Aryanism was not immutable, but subject to destruction by Jews. Anti-Semites had long insisted that German Aryan women were vulnerable to Jewish predation [...]"^[101]

Here, Heschel has applied her hypocritical racial double standard, for she is on record as opposing intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews. In a 2004 essay on how to "pass down Jewishness," she wrote: "Simply to teach that human beings are made in the image of God is not a solution to the rising

rates of intermarriage and assimilation [between Jews and non-Jews]. I don't think there are any easy answers."[\[102\]](#) So, according to Heschel's "morality," it is "right" that Jews oppose miscegenation and assimilation between Jews and non-Jews. Yet, Germans who opposed miscegenation between Germans and Jews are "anti-Semites" who engaged in "racist rhetoric."

Heschel fails to note that the Jewish religion, Zionist movement and Israeli state that she so passionately identifies with are also deeply imbued with deep fears of the danger of miscegenation between Jews and non-Jews. In this sense, Judaism, Zionism and German National Socialism are mirror images of each other.

In Jewish Scripture, Ezra 9: 1-10, 14-15; 10: 10-11 and Nehemiah 9: 1-5; 10: 31: 13: 3, 23-31 mixed marriages were denounced and the Hebrews were commanded to give up their non-Hebrew wives. According to the Catholic editors of the *New American Bible*, this was done to preserve the unique racial/cultural identity of the Hebrews. Consider these passages: "shall we again violate your [God's] commandments by intermarrying with these abominable peoples [Canaanites, Hittites, Moabites, Egyptians, etc.]" In Ezra 10: 2-4 we read: "Then Shecaniah...made this appeal to Ezra: 'We indeed have betrayed our God by taking as wives foreign women of the peoples of the land. Yet, even now there remains a hope for Israel. Let us therefore enter into a covenant before our God to dismiss all our foreign wives and the children born of them, in keeping with what you, my lord, and those who fear the commandments of our God.'"

If the criterion of distinction was religious, God would have commanded the Jews to give up only spouses and children who did not convert to the Hebrew religion. That He commanded them to give up loved ones who were non-Hebrew by ethnic origin—irrespective of whether or not they converted—shows that the dividing line was in fact racial or ethnic.

If Heschel was fair and honest, she would have noted that the fear of miscegenation is an integral part of both German National Socialism and the entities that she so passionately identifies with—Zionism and the society of Israel. For reasons unknown, Heschel failed to report that during the 1930s, The Zionist Federation of Germany displayed the same resistance to miscegenation that was displayed by National Socialism. These German Jews of the Zionist persuasion declared: "[B]ecause we, too, are against mixed marriage and for maintaining the purity of the Jewish group and reject any trespasses of the cultural domain, we—having been brought up in the German language and German culture—can show an interest in the works and values of German culture with admiration and sympathy."[\[103\]](#)

Vladimir Jabotinsky (1880-1940), the founder of the Zionist-Revisionist movement that became the ideological foundation of Israeli Likud Party, also condemned miscegenation. Consider this most revealing statement: "An increase in the number of mixed marriages is the only sure and infallible means for the destruction of nationality as such. All the nations that have disappeared in the world (apart from those, of course, who were completely massacred or who disappeared as a result of abnormal conditions of existence) were swallowed up in the chasm of mixed marriages."[\[104\]](#)

This fear of miscegenation between Jews and non-Jews carries on to this day with the present Israeli government. In mid 2009, the Prime Minister's Office and the Jewish Agency launched an aggressive advertising campaign, the goal of which is to prevent Jews from marrying non-Jews.[\[105\]](#) In September 2009, the Guardian (Great Britain) reported that Israel has state sanctioned "anti-miscegenation programs," in order to prevent Jews from marrying or dating non-Jews, especially Arabs.[\[106\]](#)

The reader should ask himself this: how can Heschel criticize National Socialist opposition to miscegenation, while she herself opposes it, and identifies with a religion (Judaism), ideology (Zionism), and state (Israel) that openly condemn miscegenation? We pose this question to Susannah Heschel: why was it "wrong and evil" for National Socialists to be opposed to miscegenation, and yet, "right and good" that Jews be opposed to miscegenation?

Christianity and Ethnic/Racial Nationalism

Heschel leaves the reader with the impression that she condemns Christian ethnic/racial nationalism, for she wrote: "Racism's argument that distinct and immutable orders exist in society lent support to a 'theology of creation.' One Institute member, William Stapel, attempted to demonstrate that racism supported Christian claims to divine creation: just as God had created societal orders—marriage, family, Volk, profession, hierarchy, property, and so forth—God had given each Volk a task and place on earth. Believers in racial hierarchy could see it as an extension of the biblical account of God's creation of hierarchical orders within nature, and social orders such as marriage, and Christians were told that racial orders were an extension of the divine order."[\[107\]](#)

Contrary to what Heschel insinuates, Stapel's claim is somewhat accurate. A passage in Paul's speech to the Athenians is consistent with the view that the Supreme Being did give each different ethnic/racial/cultural grouping a different task and place on earth. In Acts 17: 26, it is written: "From one stock he [God] made every nation of mankind to dwell on the face of the earth. It is he who set limits to their epochs and fixed the boundaries of their regions."

According to this Biblical passage, God did not integrate the peoples of the earth, but rather established boundaries between them and set limits to their historical eras. The passage also states that God created "nations." In other words, despite the fact that all men came from one stock, the Supreme Being separated humanity into groups which are different from one another in a social, political and racial sense.

In addition, Heschel may have not noticed that the message of the Hebrew legend of the Tower of Babel is similar to the National Socialist view that each Volk was given a different a task and place on earth. In Genesis 11: 1-9, the Supreme Being separates mankind into different groups and endows them with different languages—each is thereby given a different task and place on earth.

Mysticism and Racial Nationalism: Another Similarity between Zionism and National Socialism

Heschel points out that the German Christians mixed religious mysticism with their ethnic nationalism, as she notes: "'Aryan,' for them, meant not simply a physical or biological type, but much more an inner spirit that was simultaneously of great power [...]"[\[108\]](#) Further on in the same book she again expounds on this theme: "Yet, race, according to the völkisch Christians [German Christians], was manifest not only in body, but, just as importantly, in the soul. Character, personality, culture, and spirituality were all products of a racially impregnated soul [...]"[\[109\]](#)

Heschel fails to note that this National Socialist view is similar to the Zionist view expressed by her father. The elder Heschel believed that each different ethnic or racial group's development was the product of their unique group soul or spirit, for he wrote: "Every people has a right to its own territory, in which it can develop its own culture and strive for making a contribution to the world out of its own spirit."[\[110\]](#) Later on in the same book he again mixes his religious mysticism with his Jewish

nationalism: "What brought the State of Israel into being? A stream of dreaming, the sacred river flowing in the Jewish souls of all ages. No heresy could stem it, no apostasy could defile it. The State of Israel having been born out of our soul is itself a state of our soul, a reality within us." [111] (Keep in mind that Susannah Heschel wrote an approving Introduction to the book in which her father made these statements.)

Again, note the similarity between Rabbi Heschel's religious/mystical vision of his Jewish people, Israel and the Jewish "ethnic/racial soul," and the German National Socialist religious/mystical vision of their German people and the German "racial/ethnic soul." I ask Susannah Heschel this question: why was it wrong for National Socialists to have mixed mysticism with their German nationalism; yet, it was "morally correct" for her father to have mixed mysticism with his Jewish nationalism?

Walter Grundmann's Important Insights

One of the great "villains" in Heschel's writings is the National Socialist theologian and Institute Director, Walter Grundmann. One reason that Heschel condemns Grundmann is because: "Anti-Semitism remained constant within Grundmann's writings, fed in part by denunciations of Bolsheviks as Jews, at least prior to the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact [...]." [112] National Socialist claims that deeply offend Heschel's Jewish sensibilities are simply labeled "anti-Semitic," and this is supposed to function as a "logical disproof" of the claim! Heschel totally ignores the fact that on this issue Grundmann was correct: Jews did play a decisive role in the establishment and functioning of Bolshevism.

Winston Churchill discussed this in his famous 1920 article: "There is no need to exaggerate the part played in the creation of Bolshevism and in the actual bringing about of the Russian Revolution by these international and for the most part atheistical Jews. It is certainly a very great one; it probably outweighs all others. With the notable exception of Lenin, the majority of the leading figures are Jews [Lenin was part Jewish.—Ed.]. Moreover, the principal inspiration and driving power comes from the Jewish leaders. Thus, Tchitcherin, a pure Russian, is eclipsed by his nominal subordinate Litvinoff, and the influence of Russians like Bukharin or Lunacharski cannot be compared with the power of Trotsky, or of Zinovieff, the Dictator of the Red Citadel (Petrograd), or of Krasin or Radek—all Jews. In the Soviet institutions the predominance of Jews is even more astonishing. And the prominent, if not indeed the principal, part in the system of terrorism applied by the Extraordinary Commissions for Combating Counter-Revolution has been taken by Jews, and in some notable cases by Jewesses. The same evil prominence was obtained by Jews in the brief period of terror during which Bela Kun ruled in Hungary. The same phenomenon has been presented in Germany (especially in Bavaria), so far as this madness has been allowed to prey upon the temporary prostration of the German people. Although in all these countries there are many non-Jews every whit as bad as the worst of the Jewish revolutionaries, the part played by the latter in proportion to their numbers is astonishing." [113]

Recent scholarship has supported Grundmann's viewpoint. In his 1993 academic study, historian Benjamin Harshav observed: "Jews were prominent in the ranks of the early Soviet governments, and the antisemitic expression 'Judeo-Bolshevism' is not without foundation." [114] The Jewish historian Yuri Slezkine has fully documented the decisive role that Jews played in the establishment and functioning of Soviet Communism in his 2004 work, *The Jewish Century*: Jews formed the "backbone of the new Soviet bureaucracy." [115] Russian Jewish investigative journalist Arkady Vaksberg pointed out that Jews were in charge of eleven of the twelve major camp complexes of the GULAG archipelago, the Soviet Communist slave labor system that brought horror, death and suffering to millions of people. [116]

I now pose this perplexing question to Susannah Heschel. Did Walter Grundmann engage in "Anti-Semitism" because he accurately pointed out the decisive Jewish influence in Soviet Communism?

Concerning Grundmann's view of the Jewish people's historic relationship with Jesus Christ, Heschel writes: "Grundmann argued that Jews were the mortal enemies of Jesus and all who followed him." [117] There is objective truth to this belief, and one does not even have to quote the Christian Scriptures to show that this so. We have already pointed out how the Talmud brags that it was a rabbinical court which put Jesus to death, in addition to his degrading depiction in these sacred Jewish texts. Some of the most debasing things ever written about Christ are in the Talmud.

Circa 180 AD, Jewish sources compiled a historically influential, direct attack upon Jesus Christ, further supporting the view of Grundmann that many Jews throughout the centuries were his mortal enemy. We let a historian of the ancient Mediterranean world, Michael Grant, pick up the story here: "The gulf between the two faiths [Judaism and Christianity] had been steadily and rapidly widening over the years, but now in the later second century AD, when the Gospels were becoming more and more widely known, their strongly anti-Jewish tone helped to cause even the most tenuous final bridges to disappear [...] And it may well have been at this date, or just a little later, that the Jews first compiled the book which emerged subsequently as the *Toledoth Yeshu*. That work, at considerable length and in abundant detail, described Jesus as a sorcerer, the son of uncleanness. (He was also said to be a bastard, the son of a soldier called Panthera or Ben Pandera, or Ben Stada.) The *Toledoth Yeshu* enjoyed an enormous circulation throughout the ages, and its perusal, combined with a reading of the Gospels, explains clearly enough why the split between Judaism and Christianity was now irrevocable." [118]

The late Israeli scholar, Israel Shahak, in his classic study, *Jewish History, Jewish Religion: The Weight of Three Thousand Years*, revealed the hate for Jesus and Christianity that is so deeply imbued in Judaism. He points out that although Christian persecution of Jews aggravated anti-Christian feelings, these hateful attitudes exist independently of any Christian wrongdoing against Jews. They are shared by Jews who were never persecuted by Christians or who were even helped by them, and were present even when the Christian religion was itself weak and persecuted by Jews. "The very name 'Jesus' was for Jews a symbol of all that is abominable," this maverick Jewish scholar pointed out, "and this popular tradition still persists. The Gospels are equally detested, and they are not allowed to be quoted (let alone taught) even in modern Israeli Jewish schools." [119]

There is more than a kernel of truth to Walter Grundmann's view: many Jews were, and still are, the mortal enemies of Jesus Christ and Christianity. To my knowledge, Heschel never said that this is false. Expressing a widespread sentiment that has been held by many Jews down through the ages, a prophet and intellectual forefather of Zionism, Moses Hess, held that Christianity is "poison" for Jews. [120] I wonder if a dedicated Zionist like Susannah Heschel shares this opinion.

Was there any truth to the German Christian View of Jesus and Christianity?

Heschel says that "the Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish Influence on German Church Life redefined Christianity as a Germanic religion whose founder, Jesus, was no Jew but rather had fought valiantly to destroy Judaism, falling victim to that struggle." [121] She clearly believes that this is all "Nazi lies."

The Institute's belief that Jesus "fought to destroy Judaism" is an overstatement. Nonetheless, there is historical evidence that Jesus Christ was a militant opponent of the ancient Jewish religious authorities. The four Gospels unanimously insist that he was a severe critic of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Historian Michael Grant argues that, though their details vary, the four Gospels are also unanimous that Christ forcibly drove out the money changers and traders who thronged the Jerusalem Temple precincts: the surprising character of these reports suggest that they reflect an authentic historical event. If this is so, not only was Jesus violating Rome's public order, he was also attacking the Jewish priestly aristocracy, which controlled Temple affairs and derived profits from the money-changers tables he drove out. [\[122\]](#)

Previously we noted that the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew claims that he was of mixed Jewish-Gentile ancestry. If this is accepted, and because we have good reason to believe Jesus really did militantly oppose the Jewish priestly aristocracy, then the belief of the Institute is to a limited extent accurate. Jesus was not "purely Jewish," and he did fight against the Jewish religious authorities, whose ideas and customs formed the basis of the Jewish religion.

Conclusion

In regard to the course of history, theology really matters. And I would be quick to add, if the theology is in the wrong, the consequences can be ruinous. Although Susannah Heschel's research is of value because of the theological and historical material from National Socialist Germany that she has made public, it must be viewed with a healthy skepticism. Her Jewish-Zionist value system and outlook act as distorting influences upon all of her writings. As Revisionists, it is our duty to confront her distortions and correct them. Indeed, if Heschel's distortions and hypocritical double standards are allowed to go unanswered, they will continue to mislead many Christian people, with possibly disastrous historical consequences.

One only has to look at the problems in the Middle East to see the disaster that a partisan theology can help bring about. One of the main reasons that Israel gets unqualified support for their dispossession and oppression of the Palestinians (many of whom are Christian) is because there are a large number of Christians in the United States and Europe who accept the ideology of Christian Zionism. According to this fallacious line of thought, the Bible demands that Christians fan the smoldering fuze of World War III by supporting Israel's depredations on its neighbors and minorities. [\[123\]](#)

Apparently, there are also another large number of Christians and non-Christians who accept the skewed theological beliefs of Susannah Heschel, as evidenced by the favorable—and utterly uncritical—reviews that her most recent book, *The Aryan Jesus*, received. One comes away from some of these naïve reviews wondering how such apparently intelligent and learned scholars could be so unthinking and spineless. [\[124\]](#)

Heschel's deceptive claims and hypocritical racial double standards go unchallenged, at least in part, because in the contemporary world the Jewish-Zionist power elite wields enormous power, and they can brand any intellectual who deviates from their line with the dreaded "neo-Nazi" and "anti-Semite" labels. In regard to the "Holocaust" and other issues that involve National Socialism, the Jewish-Zionist power elite has enforced ideological conformity throughout much of the Western world. For the best interests of Christian nations and world peace, it is our duty, as Revisionists, to break down this Iron Curtain over the Western World.

Notes:

- [1] Michael Grant, *The Jews in the Roman World* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), p. xii.
- [2] David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard H. Popkin, (Hackett Publishing Company, 1980), p. viii.
- [3] Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Israel: An Echo of Eternity* (Jewish Lights Publishing, 1995), p. xx. This is a reprint of the book originally published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc.
- [4] Ibid, p. xxi.
- [5] Uri Davis, *Israel: An Apartheid State* (Zed Books Ltd., 1987).
- [6] Susannah Heschel, "Introduction." In A. Heschel, *Israel: An Echo of Eternity* (Jewish Lights Publishing, 1995), pp. xvii-xxix.
- [7] Ibid, pp. xxviii, 220.
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